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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

## CHURCH DECORATION.

A SERIES OF ARTICLES. NUMBER FIVE.

### LETTERING.

IN the construction of any text or illumination, it is important that the lettering should be correctly drawn, and as the amateur finds difficulty in acquiring facility and skill in forming letters, and as printed alphabets cannot always be purchased to suit the requirements of every work, a few plain instructions for drawing letters will be found of great assistance. With a handbook of printed alphabets and fancy letters, a very little practice will enable the illuminator to form any ordinary alphabet with a considerable degree of accuracy.

With regard to the proportion of Roman capitals and small, it may be taken as a general rule, that the whole of the letters, with the exception of S, J, I, F, M and N, are formed in squares. Top and bottom of the letters I and J are formed in a vertical parallelogram, half the width of the square; the letters M and N in a horizontal parallelogram, one third larger than the square. The letters A, B, E, F, H, X and Y are either divided, or have projections from the middle. This rule may be varied, and the division placed nearer the top than the base of the square. Capitals in the same word should have a space equal to half a square between them; at the beginning of a word a whole square, and between the divisions of a sentence two squares should be left.

The small letters are half the size of the capitals; the long lines of the letters b, d, f, h, k and l, are the same height as the capitals; the tails of j, p, q and y, descending in like proportion. In *Italic* letters it is usual to make the capitals three times the height of the smaller letters, and the long strokes of the small letters nearly equal to the capitals.

In illuminating, some texts and banners require a letter technically called "expanded," and others a letter "condensed." The knowledge of the formation of lettering acquired by designing and making large letters is of the greatest assistance when small ones are required. To draw Egyptian or block letters, which is the simplest form and basis

for many varieties of fancy letters, take some white paper, and rule with a straight edge six lines, giving three spaces of one inch each and two spaces of two inches each; these may be varied as the shape of the letter may require; then roughly space the width (two inches) and sketch with pencil or charcoal (this latter is very useful, as any false lines may be dusted off); then taking the illustration for a guide, and the top and bottom lines for the height of the letter, proceed to design them roughly; a few touches of the pencil will show how easily a letter may be formed. The letter M will occupy more, and the letter I, less space than any others, but in calculating a number of letters for a given space all may be roughly taken as one size. When designing a letter or alphabet, take the letter B as the standard for width, and draw all others in proportion. In drawing the plain alphabet, the only letter that calls for special observation is the letter S, as it is too often badly formed. Draw the top and bottom parts the same as for the beginning of the letter O; continue the lines in a curve, and the basis of the letter S is at once obtained; the ends of the letter, when tall and narrow, may also be made to slope. When S slopes at the terminal, C, G, should also slope in the same manner.

Having acquired some experience in drawing the plain block letters, the more fancy shaped may be attempted, and after a little practice any medieval alphabet will, with a few extra ruled lines, readily adapt itself to this mode of construction.

For an expanded letter the parallel lines are ruled the same as for a condensed letter. By first designing a plain block letter of the size required, a very effective and bold letter can be made

by the addition of points at the terminals of each letter; it is when designing a more finished letter that the advantage of the ruled lines will be apparent.

### COLORING FOR CAPITALS.

Dark colored letters are improved by an edging of white or gold; white letters may be edged with blue or gold; gold letters may be edged with any color; plain gold or silver also look well.

When the general formation of a plain letter is by practice well understood, the amount of ornament may be increased at the discretion of the illuminator. Two examples of capitals much used for church decoration are illustrated. Pencil lines when drawn over the alphabets will be of assistance when enlarged copies are required.

### TO MAKE BOLD LETTERS.

Supposing a text to be required 16 feet long and 18 inches wide, and the words to be "Emmanuel, God with us,"—in all 17 letters; taking the distance between each word as the width of a letter M, we must select a letter that will average about 9 inches in width, and for height, a good proportion would be 14 inches. To form the pattern letters for this text, rule six lines with a straight edge, giving three spaces of two inches each, and two spaces of three inches each; then roughly space the width of the letter (9 inches), and sketch with pencil as previously described, mark in firmly with a thick black line the exact size for cutting.

When the letters are 8 or 10 inches high, a piece of stout card should be cut the width of the thick part of the letter, as a guide for ruling all to the same scale. F, I, E, L, T are only so many variations of the letter E, then cut down for F, again cut for L and T, and finally for I. B will serve for P and R.

As a long text will contain a repetition of the same letter, it is advisable to cut sample letters in card or stout paper in preference to sketching the whole; and to use the sample letters for forming those required for the text. This will make the work more uniform.

Now taking the pattern letters as a guide for size, cut from stout card the letters to be used for the text. A background of leaves will require a letter on very stout card, the mounted leaves which form the background of the text preventing the letters from being fixed close to the board.

In covering the letter cut from stout card, cut the paper larger than the letter, and place the colored side of the paper face downwards on the table, then cover the card letter with paste, and place it on the white side of the paper, pressing the card letter down evenly, and keeping it in its place until dry by placing a weight over it.

